

## University of Canberra 2017 Annual Report – tabling notes

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In 2017, the University of Canberra continued its sustained growth and development – in academic outcomes and campus infrastructure. The University and its controlled entities reported positive financial results with a net surplus of \$1.8 million in 2017. The revaluation increments of \$5.4 million have also contributed to the strengthening of the University Group’s financial position.

The University of Canberra maintained its student load of about 11,600 EFTSL in 2017, with growth of about three per cent since 2013. In the same period, onshore undergraduate load grew by about eight per cent. More females than males study at the University, with an increase of about four per cent in onshore female EFTSL since 2013.

The majority of the University’s domestic students are from the ACT/Queanbeyan area (5,098), while 42 per cent of domestic students were from areas outside of this region in 2017. Domestic students from outside the ACT/NSW region almost doubled since 2013.

The University’s Strategic Plan for 2018–2022, *Distinctive by Design*, was launched in September 2017. The plan aligns with the previous five-year plan, *Breakthrough*, while incorporating lessons learned and including new initiatives to take the University to the next step in its journey.

The launch of the University’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategic Plan 2017–2021 in April 2017 showed a strong commitment by the University to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inclusion, access and success. The Strategy is the first of its kind for the University of Canberra and has set four high level objectives in its first phase.

Our new student accommodation building, UC Lodge, opened in January, offering 496 additional beds, bringing the University’s offering to 2,500 beds on campus. The Medical Radiation Science Laboratory also opened in February, providing radiographers with a simulated setting to gain pre-clinical skills.

Construction continued on campus for the University of Canberra Hospital: Specialist Centre for Rehabilitation, Recovery and Research, which is due to open in July 2018 and work progressed on the Canberra Specialist Medical Centre, which features Icon Cancer Care. This new centre will not only provide cancer care to the Canberra community, but will expand teaching and learning opportunities for the University’s students and staff. The Moran aged care facility and early learning centre is meeting targets to commence construction in 2018.

The University of Canberra was named among the world’s top 100 young universities in the prestigious 2017 *Times Higher Education (THE)* Young University Rankings. The University rose to number 91 in THE’s list of the best universities under 50 years of age, worldwide.

According to a new *THE* analysis, the University was also ranked as 30th in the world for Generation Y universities, or those founded between 1986 and 2000. The University was also named among the top 100 Asia-Pacific universities. It’s the first time THE has produced a ranking of 243 Asia-Pacific higher education institutions with the University of Canberra placed in 81st position.

The 50/50 by 2030 Foundation – a gender equality initiative established at the University’s Institute for Governance and Policy Analysis (IGPA) – was officially launched. The Foundation’s central challenge is correcting the gender imbalance in political representation and public administration leadership in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region.

In 2017 former Olympic and seven-time WNBL championship-winning coach and Basketball Australia Hall of Fame inductee Carrie Graf was announced as the University of Canberra’s inaugural Director of Sport. Multi-award-winning author and social commentator Anita Heiss also joined the University of Canberra in 2017 as a Postdoctoral Fellow.

For the 10th consecutive year, the University of Canberra was recognised as a Workplace Gender Equity Agency (WGEA) Employer of Choice for Gender Equality in 2017. The University of Canberra was one of only two organisations in the ACT to receive the citation.

In 2017, the University undertook a Curriculum Review to renew and rationalise undergraduate and postgraduate courses. The Academic Board approved a new suite of courses for delivery in Semester One 2019.

Researchers secured funding from a range of grants and partnerships with government, industry and business and continued to publish work in prestigious journals both locally and internationally.

The University’s research institutes and teams enjoyed many achievements through 2017:

- UC’s spinout company Epiaxis Therapeutics received additional investment of \$647,000 from six new shareholders and commenced a Phase 1 clinical trial for patients with metastatic breast cancer at the Canberra Hospital.
- PwC has recently joined the Knowledge Exchange Placement program, offering UC students \$15,000 scholarships.
- Climate change and its impact on species’ evolution and adaptation are the focus of two IAE research projects awarded prestigious Australian Research Council (ARC) Discovery Project grants.
- The IAE received \$1.8 million in external income from 20 different industry and public-sector partnerships and formed new partnerships with the Centre for Invasive Species Solutions, MyHealth and the Queanbeyan-Palarang City Council.
- In 2017, IGPA continued to be the largest provider of postgraduate education to the Australian Commonwealth Government with 113 Commonwealth public servant students graduating from its education programs and six PhD completions.
- Working with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), a group of University researchers is examining proprioception, or movement sense, and how time in space can dull this sense. The research is contributing to NASA’s goal of reaching Mars.
- In 2017, Dr Regan Ashby and his research team developed an innovative eye-drop based therapeutic treatment of myopia in young children and adolescents.
- The University and Kuwait’s Dasman Diabetes Institute (DDI) have signed an MoU to map the impact of diabetes in the state of Kuwait.
- The brand new human observation laboratory and robotics and sensing laboratory were completed in 2017. The robotics and sensing research laboratory features brand new equipment for collaborative robotics and human–robot interaction.

- In 2017, UC Collaborative Indigenous Research Initiative (UC CIRI) provided seed funding to an additional three projects, taking the total number funded under this scheme to eight. The projects funded in 2017 are: Introducing restorative health practices to give voice, accountability and healing value for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families/communities in the new University of Canberra Hospital; Indigenous boarding school experiences; Developing Indigenous tourism in the ACT and region.
- In 2017, the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Education Research Centre (SERC) focused on the Early Learning STEM Australia (ELSA) project – a key national early childhood initiative to encourage STEM practices in pre-schoolers.
- Centenary Research Professor Deborah Lupton was elected as a Fellow of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, one of Australia's four learned academies. Professor Lupton was recognised for her ongoing work with the University's News and Media Research Centre, which she joined in 2014.
- The N&MRC launched two research labs in 2017 — the Smart Technology Living Lab and the Digital News+ Lab.
- The SYNERGY team, led by Executive Director Professor Brenda Happell, was successful in securing a prestigious National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) project grant to trial an innovative new approach to addressing the poor physical health outcomes of Australians diagnosed with mental illness.

A ranking of the 'knowledge strength' of 25 Australian cities by the University of Canberra found only five cities are ready to capitalise on opportunities driven by information and technology. Canberra was one of those cities.

Students studying health degrees at the University of Canberra will have better access to clinical training facilities thanks to a new partnership between the University and the ACT Government. The ACT Government allocated \$2.7 million to establish a new clinical school for nursing, midwifery and allied health at Canberra Hospital, with the school being run in conjunction with staff from the University's Faculty of Health.

Throughout the year, 105 UC students took semester-long exchange and study abroad experiences with partner institutions across Asia, Europe and the Americas. Partner universities sent 191 students to study at the University of Canberra in 2017.

The University of Canberra will assist in the establishment of a national sports university in India as part of a new Australia–India sports partnership announced by Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull in Mumbai in April 2017.

The University of Canberra has committed to going the distance in a new partnership with the Indigenous Marathon Foundation (IMF). Under the agreement signed in May 2017, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will have greater access to services and more opportunities to lead healthy lifestyles.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students studying law at the University of Canberra will have greater interaction with the ACT's legal system under a new mentoring program which commenced in 2017. The University of Canberra, the Australian National University, the ACT Bar Association and the Law Society of the ACT have signed a memorandum of understanding to establish the program.

Honorary Doctorates in 2017 included founder and Chief Executive Officer of the Aurora Project and the Aurora Education Foundation Dr Richard Potok, Dr Helen Watchirs OAM and Dr Heather Reid AM.

## **Annual Report 2017 – Red flags**

### ***From Volume 2***

The University is showing a position whereby current liabilities exceed current assets. However, the University has available undrawn debt facilities at balance date of \$25.5 million and is also a recipient of regular fortnightly payments from the Commonwealth for its Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP) students and other university related funding. These two factors enable the University to meet its cash commitments when required.

### **Matters subsequent to the end of the financial year**

In February 2018 the University announced a Voluntary Separation Program to support the University in responding to the funding freeze announced by the Federal Government as part of the 2017-18 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook and align its workforce with the strategic plan Distinctive by Design. The estimated cost of the separation payments payable, including any lump sum payment in lieu of the notice period, is between \$7.0 million and \$7.5 million.

### **Likely developments and expected results of operations**

The University continues to face an uncertain policy environment. The Commonwealth Grants Scheme funding freeze for calendar years 2018 and 2019 announced on 18 December 2017 by the Federal Government as part of the 2017-18 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook, limits University funding to the 2017 level received for Commonwealth-supported bachelor degree places during these years. Other policy changes could also affect the University's finances and the University will consider the possible effects of any policy changes which are legislated.

The University has indicated it has more land than it requires for direct academic purposes and is exploring further developments and partnerships to develop this land to add to its teaching, research and training functions. The proceeds from developments will be used to support the University's strategic objectives.

### **Proceedings on behalf of University of Canberra**

There are two legal matters pending at 31 December 2017. Both matters are covered by insurance.

#### ***Later in the report:***

##### **(i) Legal proceedings**

There are two legal matters pending at 31 December 2017. Both matters are covered by insurance. No matters are considered to be financially material. The maximum insurance excess payable is \$0.01 million per claim.

### **Non-current assets held for sale**

##### **(i) Aged Care Facility**

In December 2015, the University entered into a series of agreements with a third party in relation to the construction and operation of an aged care facility which incorporates a child care facility on

part of the Bruce campus land. The third party is required to carry out estate works under a licence granted by the University and will then be granted a 75-year sublease over the land to enable construction and then operation of the aged care facility. The agreements also provide the third party with the right to propose additional projects on an additional adjacent section of the Bruce campus.

(iii) Securitised rental income

In 2015 the University sold its student accommodation rental income for Cooper Lodge and Weeden Lodges to a third party in exchange for upfront consideration of \$44.0 million. The University is contractually obligated to pay the third party a termination payment in the event of default by the University, including failure to pay the third party, or insolvency. If the University is required to pay a termination payment, it is equal to the nominal value of the expected future rental income at the date of default. At 31 December 2017, the difference between the estimated termination payment and the recorded financial liability is \$7.23 million.

As the termination payment is to be calculated by the third party on the date of default, there is uncertainty with this amount. The University has estimated this amount based on the nominal value of the expected future rental income at 31 December 2017. The University considers there is only a remote possibility a termination event will occur requiring a termination payment as the University dwellings are currently at the required occupancy rate.

**From Vol 1**

Council approved commissioning of an independent review of the culture of the University in response to the *National Report on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment at Australian Universities* issued in August.

Council also commissioned an external review of the University of Canberra’s governance systems and supporting processes. Implementation of the report’s recommendations will be completed in 2018.

**QILT Survey Results – Drop by 4% in Student Support:**

	2016	2017	Rank 2016	Rank 2017
Student Support	74.1%	70.5%	22	29